

URBAN CORE SPECIFIC PLAN

Advisory Committee - August 12, 2004



Charrette Summary - Day 1

To help guide the development of the specific plan, the City Council appointed an Urban Core Specific Plan Advisory Committee. On August 12, 2004, the Advisory Committee convened for the first time and kicked-off a two-day visioning charrette for the Urban Core.

Prior to the formal initiation of the meeting, a bus tour was conducted to provide Advisory Committee members with a physical overview of the Urban Core Specific Plan study area.



Community Development Director Laurie Madigan began the meeting by introducing Mayor Stephen Padilla. Mayor Padilla provided an introduction to the Urban Core vision effort and appointed Dr. Richard Freeman to serve as Vice Chairman for the Advisory Committee.

Mary Ladiana, Planning and Housing Manager for the City of Chula Vista, reviewed the agenda for the two-day charrette and noted the information provided in binders distributed to the Advisory Committee Member including the proposed project schedule.

Self-introductions were given by the Advisory Committee members [insert link to Advisory Committee Roster] and the consultant team. City staff introductions were made by Mary Ladiana.

The project consultant team is led by RRM Design Group with technical subconsultants in the areas of marketing/economics (Economic Research Associates) and traffic/transportation (Kimley-Horn and Associates). Mark Brodeur, Principal with RRM Design Group, described the importance of this work effort and its relationship to the planning efforts for the General Plan Update and Bayfront project. An overview of the General Plan Update was provided by Ed Batchelder, Deputy Planning Director. He explained the process was currently well underway with a major goal of linking the eastern and western areas of Chula Vista. Duane Basil, Principal Planner, reviewed the proposed land use designation changes in the General Plan Update which will also add two new land use categories: Urban Core Residential and Mixed Use.

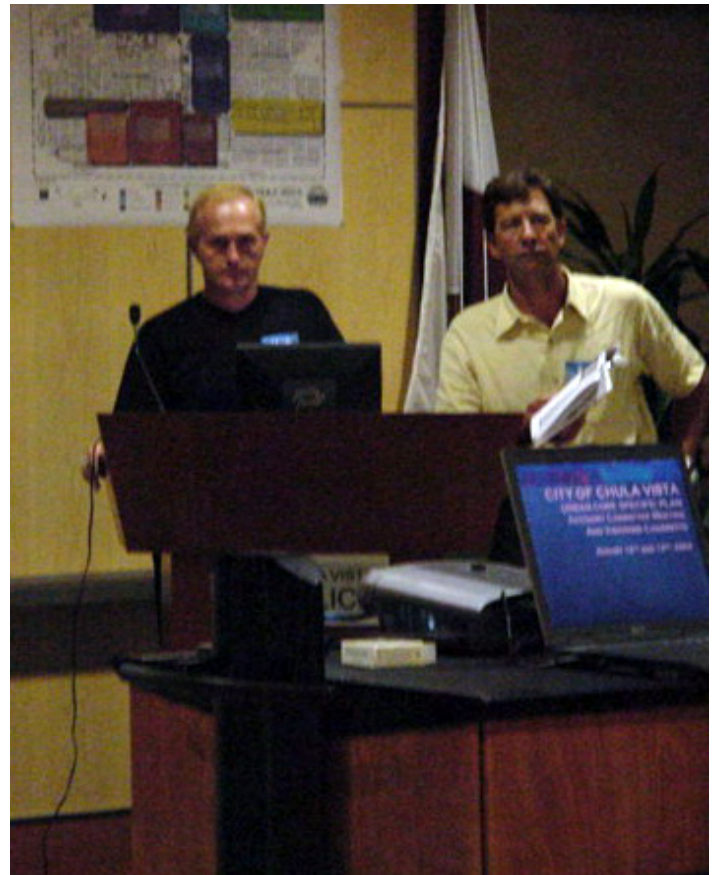
Leisa Lukes, Principal Community Development Specialist, presented an overview of the Bayfront Plan which covers approximately 550 acres along the western coast of Chula Vista. The Plan approaches the area as one bayfront with three subareas. Coordination of Port and City jurisdictional lands is a key component. A cover over the I-5 Freeway is being studied by SANDAG and Caltrans. H Street is planned to extend out to the pier.

Mark Brodeur described "what is a Specific Plan?". The relationship of a Specific Plan to a General Plan was explained – a Specific Plan must be found consistent with a city's adopted General Plan. A Specific Plan is the preferred planning tool for this work effort because it is considered zoning which must be adopted by ordinance and therefore is better for implementation. The proposed Specific Plan will also address stabilization of neighborhoods around the nine proposed districts.



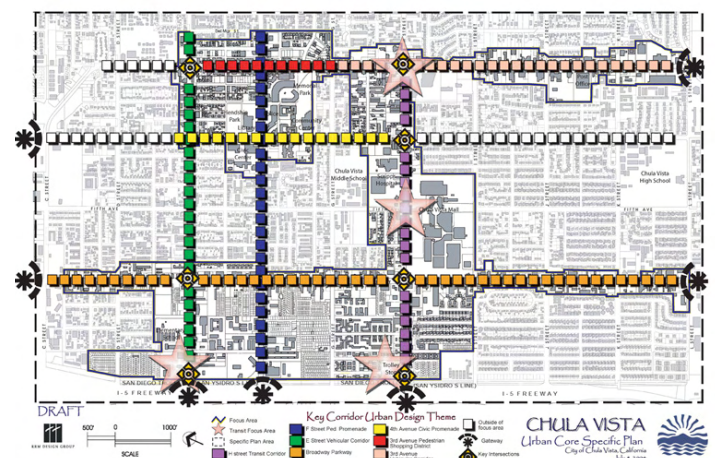
A quick round-table exercise soliciting preliminary thoughts and issues for the Urban Core was conducted. Following is a summary of the provided comments:

- Consider obstacles/attractions to drawing east-side residents to urban core – diversity, restaurants, traffic concerns – provide greater community integration and retain tax dollars
- If the Bayfront area is attractive, San Diego and surrounding areas will come
- Don't make too "high density"
- Desirable uses and amenities can be brought about through increased intensity, such as Trader Joe's, Nordstrom, ballparks, swimming pools, etc.
- Need to development regulations to ensure compatibility with surrounding existing residential neighborhoods
- Need pedestrian streets like Little Italy
- Transition out undesirable uses, revise use matrices, open up additional uses such as residential
- Economics of the plan must be considered to ensure it can be implemented
- Preserve historic resources, assistance needed now
- Cultural amenities and art in public places are needed
- Specific Plans can sometimes get too specific
- Reduce numbers of homeless by providing affordable housing accommodations
- Provide a full range of housing types and areas
- Concerns regarding potential impacts to mobile home residents



The Advisory Committee took a brief dinner break. The meeting reconvened with a review of the maps prepared by RRM Design Group so far, including:

- Land Use Concept – Urban Core Focus Districts Map
- Key Corridor Urban Design Theme Map
- Opportunities and Constraints Map
- Multiple or Large Parcels with Single Owner Map



The Advisory Committee members were then asked for their three biggest issues and three “big ideas” for the Urban Core. A summary of the provided comments follows:

- Close streets during certain times, attract restaurants
- Emphasize/create strong urban core connections to the Bayfront – the Freeway is a barrier
- Currently lack the density and demographics to attract desirable uses
- Circulation – challenge in how to get people from one place to another
- Need to develop a clear vision
- Land use compatibility between Bayfront and I-5 Freeway
- Need street landscaping along all corridors – such as canopy trees to provide comfort, shade, security
- Key issue is determining appropriate densities and associated appropriate location and connectivity
- Need something special as a focal point – maybe Chula Vista Center/Mall
- Parkways need more watering to maintain healthy landscaping – maybe provide incentives for watering
- More and bigger isn’t necessarily better – quality is better
- Downtown corridor is currently not pedestrian friendly
- Widen sidewalks in the streetscape, provide outdoor dining, limit street lane widths/number of lanes
- Provide adequate parking, but not too much – more efficient land use, encourage pedestrian environment
- Need to create housing – especially entry level such as condominiums
- Emphasize mass transit
- Plan needs to be long term – look 40 years into the future – consider what can be a mainstay of the plan but flexible
- Emphasize what is unique about Chula Vista which has an international flair due to its diversity
- Must address public safety, especially if a big attraction is brought in
- Consider impacts to schools
- Provide linkages throughout the plan
- Create a separate vision for the Downtown, different in character than the urban core
- Seek quality density
- Narrow streets like Little Italy
- Create authentic sense of place, don’t just mimic Santa Barbara
- Create connections – other ways to get into Chula Vista that are not shown on the plan
- Provide neighborhood access to focus areas
- Break “the grid” – reinforce nodes, create emphasis
- Gently develop identity for each of the neighborhoods outside focus areas
- Communication with the public is very important, make sure expectations are in synch
- Traffic - many intersections and curb cuts provide disincentives for eastside to go to Bayfront, etc. (now go around on 805)
- The developed plan must stand the test of time, probably build out over 20 years
- Include amenities and public spaces in downtown for residential uses, don’t just rely on Bayfront for recreation/amenities
- Bring in the right developers to help implement the plan
- May have too much existing storefront retail, plan for more retail cautiously, do not place it everywhere
- Consider more office uses to provide daytime population – it’s the key to getting the right kind of retail – also need enough residential density
- Connectivity should not just be toward the Bayfront, but also within the city
- Create strategies to attract visitors and shopper going to nearby areas
- Parking – keep in open air as much as possible, avoid parking garages
- Traffic – consider providing an express street to downtown from I-5 or I-405 and/or one-way streets
- Need to overcome some perceptions of Chula Vista
- Main issue is “follow through” – a strong plan implementation program will be needed